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ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT **NEWS RELEASE**

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Lead Safety Rule for Renovation, Remodeling and Paint

SAN DIEGO—On April 22, 2010, a new rule issued by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) mandates that all renovation and repair contractors working in pre-1978 homes, schools, and day care centers who disrupt more than six square feet of lead paint are required to become EPA Certified in lead-safe work practices.

Contractors are required to take a one-day training course and firms must send a short application to the EPA. If not, they could face potential fines in the future. This affects any plumber, electrician, painter, window replacement expert and trades person who impacts painted surfaces.

Steve Owens, Assistant Administrator of the Office of Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, said there is a simple reason for the new rule: protecting people's health, especially children. "Childhood lead poisoning is a preventable disease, and our goal is to eliminate it," said Steve Owens.

STILL A PROBLEM

Many contractors think the issue of lead paint poisoning went away years ago, or that they are doing all that needs to be done to avoid it. But lead paint poisoning isn't just about eating paint chips, and even contractors who think they are doing a good job may not be working in a lead-safe manner. In fact, new research shows that contractors such as plumbers, electricians, painters and window replacement experts can inadvertently expose children to harmful levels of lead from invisible dust disturbed during jobs they perform every day. There is also the risk that workers could inadvertently take contaminated clothing home and produce a risk to their families.



(MORE)

“The greatest risk is for young children living in homes during renovations,” said Owens. “One study found they were 30% more likely to have unsafe levels of lead in their blood than kids in homes where renovations were not occurring. So it’s very important that contractors learn how to work lead-safe and that families hire lead-safe certified contractors.”

"These new lead safety regulations on homes built prior to 1978 are intended to safeguard homeowners and the remodelers thru the use of extensive training and verification measures."

Matt Adams - Vice President of Building Industry Association of San Diego County.

A pregnant woman exposed to lead can transfer lead to her unborn child. The irreversible damages of lead poisoning can lead to a range of effects from memory loss and diminished motor skills to behavioral and learning disabilities.

Those who work on pre-1978 homes, apartments, schools, day care centers and other places where children spend time—from large and small contractors to building services professionals—will have to take the necessary steps to become lead-safe certified. Firms must register with the EPA and pay a fee. Individuals must take a one-day training course from an EPA-accredited training provider to become a certified renovator. Certification is good for five years.

“Protecting the public health is part of our department’s mission and our Lead Safe Neighborhoods Program is an important component of that goal.” – Chris Gonaver, Director – City of San Diego Environmental Services.

The EPA is mindful of the small added costs that may result from complying with this important rule. To that end, he said the EPA is launching a consumer campaign designed to raise awareness of the dangers of lead paint poisoning, and encourage consumers to choose only contractors who are Lead-Safe Certified.

WHAT IS REQUIRED?

While this may be new information to many contractors, many of the lead safe work practice requirements have already been in place since May 2008 when the city of San Diego’s Lead Hazard Prevention and Control Ordinance was adopted and requires:

- renovators to use lead-safe work practices when disturbing lead paint on pre-1979 housing and other structures;
- property owners to correct lead hazards in pre-1979 housing after notice of the lead hazard;
- property owners to perform visual inspection and correction of presumed lead hazards prior to re-occupancy of a vacant rental unit;
- home improvement/water pressure equipment rental stores to make available lead education material to customers; and
- childcare facilities to obtain proof of blood lead testing at enrollment.

For more information on the San Diego’s Lead Safe Ordinance and other details, visit www.lead safeneighborhoods.org and click on “Lead Hazard Prevention and Control Ordinance,” call 858-694-7000, or email lead-safe@sandiego.gov.

For additional information including how your firm can get Lead-Safe Certified, where to find an EPA-accredited trainer in your area, or find a RRP certified firm, visit www.epa.gov/getleadsafe.